

# THE REFORMER.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth.—*Jeremiah*, v. 1.

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[From the *Boston Recorder and Telegraph* of June 3.]

## AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS.

From a friend of Missions within the bounds of Massachusetts, we received, a few days since, the sum of *four dollars*, accompanied with the following note:

“In the spring of 1822, during a revival of religion in my native town, in which I hope I had a share, I felt unusually anxious for the conversion of the world; and taking into view the vast exertions which must be made before that glorious millennial day shall arrive, I resolved to do something to assist in the work of Missions. But not having the means within my reach, I set apart four rows across my field of corn in planting time, the produce of which I determined to devote to that purpose. My feeble endeavours were evidently blessed—the field yielded abundantly. He who ‘hears the ravens when they cry,’ can also feed them, without suffering them to touch any thing consecrated to his service. It is worthy of particular notice, that while other fields in the same neighbourhood suffered much from vermin, *this remained entirely uninjured*, though equally exposed as they [We hope the man does not tell a falsehood.]

“When I perceived such a manifest interposition of Providence in behalf of my feeble efforts, I could shrink into nothing and say, ‘it is the Lord;’ and to adopt the language of the apostle, ‘neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.’ This small pittance I preserved by itself, and sold it in autumn for 3 dolls. 29 cents. Being at that time some embarrassed, I en-

deavoured to excuse myself by devoting it *that* year to pay former annual subscriptions and donations, which doubtless amounted to that sum. But now, feeling that I was in an error, I enclose it with the interest, being about 3 dollars 75 cents, to which I will add 25 cents for my unfaithfulness, making the small sum of 4 dollars; which I send to you, begging you to cast it into the treasury of the Lord, in that branch where you may find the greatest call.”

Those not acquainted with such men as the writer of the above, might be led to suppose they were a very pious sort of people, and actuated by pure and benevolent motives. But the reverse, when they become known, in almost every instance, is found to be the case. Blind to a true knowledge of God, destitute of principle, and seeking the favour and applause of men, they are just fit instruments to promote the schemes and plans of corrupt priests. One out of many instances of the truth of this remark will here be given.

A few years since, the *New York Missionary Register* published a letter from a Mr. Bliss to the Treasurer of the United Foreign Missionary Society, enclosing 11 dollars, handed him by the “Rev.” A. Peters, of Bennington, (Vermont) from a labouring man, with a request that he would transmit it, and “conceal his name.” The account, as published in the Register, proceeded to state, that this labouring man saved 75 cents of it by working on the 4th of July—1 dollar by denying himself and family the use of ardent spirits—1 dollar by not wearing

a neck handkerchief—1 doll. 25 cents by having his fulled cloth only coloured, not dressed; and another item of 4 dollars by wearing, himself and family, thick shoes. The motive for publishing this account, as avowed by the Editors of the *Register*, was, "that others might be induced to follow so WORTHY an example."

Now for the "worthy example," and the man's piety.

The Editor of the *Bennington Gazette* afterwards made the following statement: "While this man was thus 'doing penance and starving his body,' he sold a piece of land and took his pay; but, before the grantee could get his deed recorded, a creditor of the donor attached the same piece of land, and secured his title—leaving the honest purchaser without remedy." The *American Watchman*, in commenting on the above circumstance, observes—"It exhibits an instance of the grossest dishonesty and hypocrisy, and strengthens us in the belief we have hitherto entertained, that spiritual pride, love of fame, and other equally impure motives, are the incentives which influence the greater part of those engaged in educating men for the ministry, and sending missionaries to the heathen."

We will present one more instance of the boasting and vain-glory now so frequently manifested, published, and applauded by the religious and charitable people of the day. A late missionary print, under the head of "LIBERALITY," gives the following statement.

"A merchant in the State of New York, in a recent letter to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, says:

"This day I send you, as above, 100 dollars, and to the New York Seaman's Society, 50 dollars,—to the Domestic Missionary Society of New York, 50 dollars—and to the Theological Seminary of Princeton, 50 dollars; and, if my business prospers, I shall have 1000

dollars more to spare this year. I am helping some of our weak churches 10 to 20 dollars a year, and promising and endorsing for them to larger amounts. Suppose I appoint myself bishop of a dozen weak churches, and provide ministers for them—will not that be well? I know of one society who want a man full of the spirit of Christ, who will labour for 300 dollars a year, and board, horse-keeping, &c. till he can build up the society to greater strength. If you can send me such a man, let him come at once—I will see him paid."

#### "REVIVAL MINISTERS."

Under this head, a writer in the *Boston Recorder & Telegraph*, speaks of the "*Tolland county Female Society for promoting Revivals of Religion*." This is quite a new kind of society, and its object is stated to be to "hold out encouragement and support to such men as have been signally blessed in commencing and forwarding so glorious a work." "In a word," says the writer, "these men [having good pay well secured] are to visit the churches—to arouse the sleeping disciples of the Lord Jesus—to raise and sustain a high tone of religious feeling—awaken the consciences of sinners," &c. The writer continues,—“The existence of such a class of labourers in the vineyard of Christ, set and kept apart for this very purpose, is warranted by several weighty considerations.” Then follow the considerations, winding up with the conclusion,—“that such men as are usually termed *revival ministers*, ought to be sought out, encouraged, and supported, as they are by our truly pious and benevolent sisters of ‘*Tolland county*.’”

In the midst of all the numerous plans, associations, and human contrivances now going on in christendom to spread the gospel, pure and undefiled religion is rapidly falling into decay; and professors in general are becoming just like the Scribes and Pharisees in



the time of our Saviour,—having the same blinded zeal for God, and the same anxiety to make proselytes to their faith, without being much concerned or even able to make them really better, since they themselves, with all their outward works and show of godliness, are among the greatest and most incorrigible of sinners.

#### NEW ENGLAND FASHIONS IN NEW YORK STATE.

The *Western Recorder*, printed at Utica, “under the patronage, and for the benefit of the Western Education Society and Auburn Theological Seminary,” contains the following advertisement.

#### CONCERT.

A Concert of Sacred Music will be given at the Presbyterian Church in Augusta, on Friday evening, the 6th May next, by the Choir of said Church, under the direction of Mr. D. Clark. Several Gentlemen and Ladies of the vicinity, and several Gentlemen Amateurs from Utica, are expected to attend. Exercises to commence at half past 7 o'clock, P. M.

☞ Tickets for admission, 25 cents each, to be had at the Stores of Messrs. Chandler and Moss, near the Church.

April 26, 1825.

Wherein do these “concerts” differ from theatrical exhibitions, save only that the latter have not the word “sacred” affixed to them. Both are intended to amuse the people, and to obtain money from them.

Meeting-houses and theatres are indeed in these days nearly on a par—they are places of merchandise, where the people are amused and gratified, and where they pay their money liberally for the scenes and performances acted before them. Here, too, they can exhibit themselves in their best attire before a multitude of spectators, see their acquaintances, and are furnished with a topic for displaying their talents and ingenuity by descanting on the merits of the performances from the stage or the pulpit. In many cases there is nearly as much religion to be met with at one of these places

as the other,—and the same persons often attend both. The consecration of one of the buildings can be of no benefit in imparting either virtue or religion to those who assemble within its walls.

[From the *Pilot*, printed at New Haven.]

#### 700,000 MINISTERS!!!

If the seventh angel had sounded his trumpet, and proclaimed that the time was come when “the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,” and that this should be effected by three great societies, officered and manned as the Education, Bible and Missionary societies are; that the rich should cast in their abundance, and the poor their mites to the “treasury of the Lord” in New York, and that 700,000 ministers should be raised to carry the light of salvation to a world sitting in darkness, infinitely different would have been the aspect of this subject.

We do not deem it a light thing that men, mostly of *one* christian denomination, and not suspected of any strong tendencies to piety, should assume the divine prerogative of extending the gospel, should appoint themselves keepers of the Lord’s treasury, and should levy contributions on the people to effect their purposes.

They have indeed drawn into their snares some members of those religious classes which *must* sink if these societies prevail. Such adjuncts were probably honest enough; perhaps they expected some present profit or popularity. We cannot well account for such things. Joseph’s brethren sold him into Egypt; and since that, many rare sales have taken place!

They have also drawn in some *really* pious men, hoping that a little leaven might leaven the whole lump, and well knowing that some *real* indigo would give a *good colour* to the *sample end* of the piece.

Though these institutions are Pres-

byterian and federal from the foundation to the top-stone, yet we find among their visible supporters a few respectable men of the religious orders which are constantly recruiting from them, and we find a few republicans of high rank! When a man's own popularity is his idol god, and when he considers his own promotion to be the great good of the universe, he naturally joins these societies, knowing that they and their thousand auxiliaries and agents, all professing to be in the employ of heaven, can have a great influence on *votes*.

There was a time in the ancient colony of New-Haven, when no man could be a free burgess unless he was a church-member—and the time is hastening, when, if there shall be no effectual resistance from the friends of religious and civil liberty, a decree will go forth from these societies, that no man shall be president or vice-president of the United States unless he be of their fraternity, and that the treasury of the United States shall be in the charge of some manager of the Lord's treasury. A like decree will extend to the several States—and the great inquiry, in respect to a candidate for civil office will be, not whether he is honest, capable, and friendly to the constitution, but whether he is a member of the Bible, the Missionary, or the Education Society.

At the opening of the American revolution there were powerful treatises in favour of 'the Rights of Men.' They were intense flashes of light from the gloom of ages, during which the divine right of kings, the infallible dominion of priests, and the prostration of man had been established by custom, protected by laws, and supported by arms. To many it appeared to be the height of distraction for a people, born subjects to his most gracious majesty, the defender of the faith, to assert the right of self-government; but the arms in the hands of the "sons of liberty," sustained the arguments of

the pen, and his most gracious majesty was declared to be "a tyrant, unfit to be the ruler of a free people."

We succeeded, and joyfully commenced the institutions which should protect our civil liberties; but, in the ardour of our triumph, we neglected the protection of our better half, the *rights of conscience*. It has been the will of heaven to send into our world earthquakes, hurricanes, and tempests, and often to desolate in a moment the forests of a century and the earnings of many generations. The same infinite power sent or permitted to arise among us a combination of men, consisting partly of the enemies of the revolution, and partly of *unsound* priests; for no *sound* priest ever left "the word of God to serve tables:" and these united to form what they believed to be the indestructible firm of Moses and Aaron. In this capacity they drew into their snares from the east, the west, the north and the south—and they caught in their traps the unwary, and for many years presented an unbroken phalanx against the republicans of New England.

When constitutions of state governments were formed, their influence was uniformly against any article which should give to all denominations equal privileges, and thus secure the rights of conscience.

At the close of the late war, this combination, which had been a curse and calamity to us for many years, had nearly lost its power: Those who had carried the holy wallets, with their provender in one end and a stone in the other, threw off their burdens. Moses lost all his power, and Aaron had the best possible chance of atoning for his past errors by devoting the remainder of his days to the care of souls; but such Aarons, when they have once tasted how good and pleasant it is for federal brethren to dwell together in unity, felt, like an old coachman, a great relish for the crack of the whip, and they cried with a loud voice, Mo-



ses, Moses! and from the north Missionary Moses, from the south Bible Moses, and from the interior Education Moses, answered: and the parties met, embraced, and formed articles, the main object of which was the raising of money by the admission of members, and by all manner of addresses to the ambition, the piety, enthusiasm or hypocrisy, the fears and hopes, the joys and sorrows, of this great community.

To the Jesuits, who formed the articles of the three societies, it must have been evident, that if they could lay the whole country under contribution, even to the raising of 700,000 ministers, their influence would have been wholly irresistible. This is the *last effort* of open defiance against the religious and civil liberties of the United States. Their organization gives them great power of practising on the religious feelings and of drawing severely from the almost exhausted means of the poor. If they had believed themselves to be in the employ of heaven, would they have confined their donations to the merest mites of their own wealth? Would they have built a Depository at great cost, instead of hiring one at moderate rent? Would they have been accumulating monies and lending them out and taking mortgages for security? All this, while Jews and gentiles, poor Pagans and Mahometans are daily sinking to perdition!

No—they are a great trading-house, like Rome: they forgive sins on cheaper terms than Rome does, the smallest mites being accepted as evidence of adhesion; they admit into their communion those who will give them money; they denounce as infidels all who do not *believe in THEM*; they issue their bulls and anathemas against all opposition; they send forth their legends as Rome sends forth her legends, each requiring credence, because their stories are in print; they make pretences of having always in view some

great and holy objects, very important to the divine glory, but never compass any thing but their own personal advancement.

Their principal trade, however, is in *Bibles*. These they have of many sizes and prices, and in various languages—and the very name of dealing in Bibles is so imposing! Connect with this their correspondencies with Bible Societies abroad, officered by dukes and earls, and their actually sending a *few* Bibles to the Heathen, and their magnificent purpose of raising 700,000 ministers to convert seven hundred millions of the human race!

All these things place these great societies to windward of the Church of Rome, and cause thousands, who do not understand their machinery, to fall down and worship the image.

This spirit of trading, in the mother societies, has extended to their auxiliaries, to many of our printing offices and churches; and in fact the *trading* in religion and religious books has become one of the most lucrative branches of business in New England. This fact is so well known, and its details are so fully under the public eye, that we shall not comment on it at present. We hasten to close this number by a brief view of the influence of these societies on the actual religion of our towns; and that we may meet all the responsibilities of the subject, we will consider the condition of our own town.

Here, in this delightful city of gardens, we might live and be happy, as were those of the vale of Abyssinia, were it not that the devotees of these societies have on their side all the religion, with all its promises and earthly profits, and are hereafter to shine as stars forever and forever, while another class of men, as good as the first, according to all human appearance, are to hold their peace, while they are called infidels and atheists, and are finally to settle down in eternal burnings!

In the sermon on the mount we

read, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and shall persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." This blessedness the devotees have never enjoyed. But many of them have the highest seats in the synagogues, some of them are called Rabbi, all of them have a good account given of them in the market Magazines and Christian Telegraphs—and no man speaks evil of them *falsely*. With such comforts in hand and such glorious prospects in future, they ought to be contented and joyful, even though their high pretensions should be occasionally questioned.

Hard indeed is the condition of those among us, who refuse to pay tithes to the societies. They are like the unfortunate man, stopped on the road, threatened to be robbed of the last cent for his obstinacy, if he resists, and to be equally robbed for his cowardice, if he surrenders. Our houses are infested by mendicants for holy uses, crying, Give, give. We are not even to be allowed the disposal of our own charities. Professing men and professing women, among whom are some honest and deceived enthusiasts, claim a right to manage our monies, to dispose of our characters in this world and of our souls in the future. We have every reason to be thankful that our present and future destinies are not in their hands. We have souls as dear to us as their souls are to them; we understand the divine mind and will as well as they do; we have no disposition to exchange with them the chances of the future; and living or dying, we shall rejoice, as sincerely as they can, that the "Judge of all the earth will do right, and that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

[From the Gospel Herald.]

*To Missionary Schemers, and advocates of proud Clergymen, greeting:*

Men and Brethren—Seeing that you verify the truth of the Scriptures, in making your proselytes two-fold more

the children of hell (or darkness) than they were before, we are constrained to address you, and to offer you some honest advice at this critical juncture. You must be aware, gentlemen, that your ministers or priests are waxing prouder and prouder. Your expenses for the support of priests, and building and ornamenting churches, as they are called, are increasing, and the Heathen, in despite of all your well meant endeavours, are Heathen still.

Have you never, during a moment of serious reflection, thought of these things? Has it never occurred to you, that your conduct in incurring expenses for the prodigal maintenance of priests, and the chimerical notion of converting the Heathen to a faith which is a constant subject of *dispute among yourselves*, is not authorised by, nor commanded in, the Scriptures? Have you so far been swallowed up in these popular schemes, as to forget that the Scriptures imperiously require the exercise of charity or love to the suffering sons and daughters of the human family, and that no act of supererogation towards clergymen, can absolve you from this sacred duty? You must confess that enormous sums of money have been expended, within ten years past, as clergymen have been pleased to dictate. You know that the poor of your own flesh have been despised and neglected, while proud imperious men have consumed large sums, received from the public purse, in luxury and extravagance. These things have not been done in a corner, but before your eyes, and sanctioned by you.

Contrast the conduct and pretensions of modern priests, with the conduct and pretensions of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and you will find them lamentably deficient in the indispensable qualifications necessary to constitute an honest priesthood. Contrast their doctrine with that taught by Jesus Christ and his disciples, and you will discover the impositions which



have, thus far, been practised upon you with apparent impunity.

We entreat you to pause in your mad career, and consider the things which belong to your peace. Remember that FAITH is one thing, HOPE another, and RELIGION another. Examine for yourselves, and you will discover that religion, such as God approves, is the consequence, and not the cause, of faith; and that hope necessarily proceeds from the possession of knowledge which produces faith. *Religion* has nothing to do with those opinions, principles, and anathemas, which craze the heads and harden the hearts of modern religionists. A man may pamper his minister, be constant in attendance at church, and in the observance of the whole formula of what is called religious duties and ordinances, expend much money in missionary enterprises, and much time in prayer and prayer meetings, and never do so much as one act of pure and undefiled religion the whole time. It is therefore evident, that pure and undefiled religion before modern priests, and pure and undefiled religion before God, even the Father, are two things. In the one case, it is to subserve the interests and promote the ends of proud unfeeling men; and in the other it is to relieve the needy and helpless. Are not these things so? Can you excuse yourselves for the neglect of duties which God commands, and find an excuse for joining hand in hand with men whom Christ portrayed, when he pronounced the character of the ancient Pharisees? Remember, it is one thing to serve such men, and to pamper them, and another to serve God, by imitating the meek and lowly Jesus, and administering to the wants of the widow and fatherless.

[From the *Christian Baptist*.]

Shortly after my arrival at N—, [probably Nashville] I went to the Presbyterian meeting-house. It was a tasty and magnificent edifice, and well

filled with fashion and beauty. The wooden throne was superb, and in the first boxes sat and reclined the wealthy and proud on seats as soft as sofas.— After a silent contemplation of the polite crowds entering and walking to their respective pews, in all the majesty of the theatre, which feasted the eyes of those already seated, and furnished texts for the first half of the week—the grave young parson commenced the public worship of that God who delights in a fine exterior, and in a proud and aspiring heart; who despises the poor cottage and the cottager, the rough meeting-house and the rude and rough frequenters of it. He sang and prayed one hour and six minutes; or rather he offered songs for the sweet singers who expressed their piety in all the gracious flexions of symphonious voices, while the devout audience worshipped in admiring the harmony of music, and praised their God for having given such fine voices and charming music to men and women. His prayer was well pronounced in periods such as Dr. Blair commends; and in the true philosophy of rhetoric he worshipped, if not in spirit and in truth, certainly in taste and elegance. His sermon was forty-five minutes long, and was all built on this clause, “Why will ye die, O house of Israel.” He finished with one song and prayer twenty-seven minutes long, and then blessed the people and sent them home for one week. Next day I inquired after his stipend, and found it was annually 2000 dollars, besides marriage fees and funeral sermons extra, amounting to perhaps 1000 more. Six months in the year he gave them two orations per diem, and six months one, averaging forty-five minutes each; making in all fifty-eight hours and one half in a year, valued at 34 dollars per hour, or 26 dollars per sermon. His sermon on “Why will ye die, O house of Israel,” cost the congregation 26 dollars, except we should count something on the prayers: but as he was hired to preach

and not to pray, it is just to fix this value upon his sermons. Now if one clause of a verse cost that people 26 dollars, the question with me was, how much would it cost them to have the whole Bible thus explained? I soon found, by the rule of three, it would require rather more than a thousand years to get once through, and cost the congregation one million three hundred thousand dollars to have it thus explained. But the misfortune was that they must all die before they would hear it all explained, and pay all their lives for that which would never be accomplished. But they were amused once in a week for their money, and their life was only a frolic throughout, and the parson might as well have some of their money as the play-actor, or the confectioner. During the evening I was entertained by contrasting the present state of the "Christian congregations" with that of the first disciples, and their teachers with those who were first employed in this work. Blessed revolution! when the same sort of men, and actuated by the same motives too, now pay dollars instead of stripes for hearing preachers; when the children of those who whipped and scourged the first teachers now contribute by tens and twenties to those who call themselves the successors of those who freely received and freely gave.

*For the Reformer.*

UNION COLLEGE, JUNE, 1825.

*To the Editor of the Reformer*—Of all the absurdities which have crept into the Christian church and injured the Christian name, long and frequent prayers appear to me the most palpable. Something might possibly be said in behalf of these long-winded petitions to the Throne of Grace, if there were no definite regulations on the subject in the Scriptures. But there are instructions on this subject in the Scriptures; and they are of the most positive nature; and furthermore they were delivered by Christ himself, and that

too, to his apostles, the ministers of his church. What can be more explicit than the following verses of the 6th chapter of Matthew?

5. "And when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."

7 "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking."

8. "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him."

And yet the ministers of the Gospel—officers of colleges, with the Bible in their hands, learning in their heads, and pretended piety in their hearts, live in continued and open violation of precepts so plain and positive. Surely the *learned* gentlemen must be extremely ignorant of their Divine Master's injunctions or else bare-faced hypocrites: the latter seems the most probable.

What is the substance of these prayers? Do they consist of any thing except "*vain repetitions*"? I feel conscientious in saying that, with one or two exceptions. I never heard one from a Calvinistic mouth that contained less than ten; and I have heard a great many that contained as many as fifty. Is the Almighty *deaf* or *sleeping* that he must be continually importuned for wants, many of which exist only in the imagination?

Dr. Paley tells us that to take the name of God in *vain* is to mention it "when it is useless; and it is useless when it is neither intended nor likely to serve any good purpose; as when it flows from the lips idle and unmeaning; or is applied upon occasions inconsistent with any consideration of religion or devotion, to express our anger, our earnestness, our courage, or our mirth: or indeed when it is used at all except in acts of religion or in



serious and seasonable discourse upon religious subjects." Now, the manner in which the clergy at present use the name of God in prayer cannot be "in acts of religion," because they violate one of the most express injunctions of our Saviour in so doing. Therefore, without examining this definition any farther, it is my serious opinion that the frequent repetition of the name of God in prayer is neither more nor less than so many violations of the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." To add insult to profanation it is the general practice to wind up a prayer of an hour long with "we are not heard for our much speaking."

In Calvinistic churches it is the general custom of the congregation to stand erect when the holy man commences his petition. But long before the reverend personage is prepared to say "Amen," a majority of the long faced professors have fallen beneath the influence of the *spirit*—but unfortunately that spirit is *somnus*. I cannot much blame them; for as scrupulous as I am to comply with the ceremonies of the place, it is with extreme difficulty that I can keep from falling asleep beneath the somniferous effect of the drowsy petitioner. What efficacy is there in such prayers? Does it not destroy the effect which rational prayer ought to have on a congregation?

The collegiate, whose mind is not shackled by a drowsy luke-warm religion, and whose actions are dictated by the independent spirit which resides in his own breast, cannot but feel indignant at forms and ceremonies so repugnant to the interests of true religion. He is astonished to find the plainest precepts of the Author of his religion treated with solemn mockery by those who profess to be Doctors of the Church. And if his spirit does not possess that decided character which spurns the unhallowed encroachments of clerical ambition, he is in danger of

falling into a total neglect of every religious duty. To avoid being a witness of such degeneracy is not in his power, if he pays any regard to the laws of his institution. Attend chapel he *must*—attend church he *must*—and as the fruits of his obedience, he *must* listen to what his reason contradicts and his soul abhors. How is it possible for him to give a conscientious assent to a prayer which contains so many "vain repetitions," and which is distinguished for so "much speaking"? Hence the Sabbath becomes to him a day of real misery instead of intellectual comfort and rest. This has an unhappy influence on his mind, because he is apt to become alienated from the rational duties which ought to be performed on that day. We are made of flesh and blood; and flesh and blood sometimes carry us to extremes. What is more natural for a person who has been tortured almost out of his existence by some quack physician, than to reject even such operatives as may be necessary for his recovery? What is more natural for a person who has become disgusted with vain and useless ceremonies, than to reject even such as are rational?

Let us fondly hope that the independent efforts of those who dare to rally around the standard of religious toleration, may yet succeed in lifting the veil that conceals from the multitude the ridiculous absurdities which disgrace our religion and threaten us with the tyranny of an odious priesthood.

A JUNIOR.

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*For the Reformer.*

The Presbyterian clergy have been frequently charged with an attempt to control the civil policy of our country; and they in their turn have constantly denied it, as a thing most foreign to their thoughts. This suspicion, I should suppose, would have kept those who felt it watchful of their movements, and especially their adherents: for we could not suppose the clergy

would publicly proclaim their designs, or even be known as taking an active part in perfecting them, when they would be so contrary to their declarations. We must therefore expect to learn it only from those who have entered into their views. From these active tools we may read those lessons which they have received from head quarters. I have been surprised there has been so little notice taken of the measures which these adherents have pursued, and the effects, in some instances, which they have produced.—Nothing but the sacred cause of liberty and of the rights of conscience would induce me to make these remarks.

I noticed, during the contest in the presidential election, great pains were taken to let the people know which of the candidates were professors of religion; as though the empty profession was of real importance. I also found many were influenced by it. A few of that number were so open-hearted that they declared they would not support a person who had not made a profession of religion. These advocates for religious profession, I found, were anxious to know whether these presidential candidates were sincere: to test the truth of which, the first inquiry was—"Have they given any thing to the Missionary Society?" This being ascertained, they appeared to be satisfied. That officiousness which was manifested to furnish particulars, convinced me that it was designed to supply the deficiency of other considerations to recommend their respective candidate. The more pious a man really is, the better it is for him: but, so far as this trumpeting religious professions served to corrupt voters, so far it ought to be reprehended.

Whatever corrupt effect this had in the federal election through the Union, I cannot say; but it has been clearly out-done in the state election in New York. I recollect that Governor Clinton was denounced by the Presbyterian magazines for suffering Red Jacket's

communication to be published: And what was the consequence? At the next election for governor Mr. Clinton lost it. Mr. Clinton then took the hint—he joined the Bible society; contributed to the missionary cause, and made a famous speech. His name was sounded with great applause. Now behold his reward: at the succeeding election he had more than twenty thousand majority! If this does not prove the control of the clergy over the civil policy of our country, whether it was foreign to their thoughts or not, I cannot conceive what greater evidence can be adduced.

Thus the Presbyterian clergy have succeeded in this state. No man can hold an office without their gracious approbation. Pious fraud must be the efficient door into which the ambitious must enter to obtain any civil preferment. No sooner was the influence of the clergy tested in that election, than measures were pursued to render the clerical influence permanent. A systematic arrangement was adopted in the common schools to make the rising generation learned in pious romances. Hereafter the will of the clergy must be consulted; and whoever lives to see thirty years roll away, may see the legislative hall of the state filled with the creatures of clerical patronage, and wonderfully learned in this systematic science.

There must be many in the state who lament the loss of their liberty, and the commencement of the dark ages rolling on; but, alas! they must do it in silence, otherwise they will be the marked victims of infuriated bigotry. If the clergy do not use to them the language of the Pope's legate to king John of England, after kicking off his crown while on his knees before him, "*I will let him know what it is to offend St. Peter,*" they will keep them in the back ground, or point to Clinton, and tell them, unless you repent and unite with us, we will turn you out of office.



What a happy circumstance it is that the band of patriots who acquired our liberties, have nearly all retired from the land of the living. Their feelings must be severely wounded to see their descendants treat their devotion to the liberties of their country with ingratitude, and so soon give up to the worst kind of tyranny,—to the infuriated bigotry of clerical despotism, whose tender mercies have ever been found to be cruel.

There is yet a hope, that a redeeming spirit exists in the bosom of our country, though now slumbering, which will awake in time to save us; and the sons of freemen may continue to enjoy the rich inheritance of their fathers, and rejoice in the salvation. CYRIL

[The following communication has been received from a person of standing and responsibility in the State of Ohio.]

*To the Editor of the Reformer.*

SIR—You have published many valuable essays in your little work, warning the people to be on their guard against the encroachments of the clergy, a majority of whom, in every age and country, and of every sect, *when numerous and wealthy*, have proved themselves fond of privileges, anxious for power, and quite willing to live better than their parishioners, whether on the proceeds of their own rightful earnings, voluntary donations from their followers, or sums extorted from the people at large by the arm of power, or, what is nearly the same, drawn from the community by the influence of established custom, which few, even among those who have the desire, have sufficient moral courage to resist.

Having particularly observed the steady opposition every where manifested by the clergy against free inquiry—their numerous plans to obtain wealth, fame and influence—and above all, their extreme anxiety to head and control every literary institution, in which they often succeed over men of superior science, greater wisdom, and

equal virtue, I am very sensible of the necessity and utility of a temperate, impartial, and cheap periodical, like the "Reformer." And so long as its spirit and character shall continue to be what it now is, I hope it will never be suffered to languish for want of patronage.

I have been led to these remarks by reflecting on the recent appointment of the Rev. James McAboy to the office of Post Master at Newport, Ohio. An appointment which is as exceptionable, as I hope it is unprecedented. It is exceptionable, because it is in direct opposition to the spirit of our government, as the following brief statement of facts will sufficiently show. The incumbent, at the time of his application for the office, lived, as he now does, with his family, in the town of Athens—*fifty-six miles from Newport!* And it is not alleged, neither by him nor his friends, that he has any intention of removing to Newport. On the contrary, he has been known to avow, that his object in procuring the appointment, was, that he might enjoy, what has been aptly termed, the *glorious* privilege of *franking*; which, like his friend and coadjutor, the Reverend Luther Rice, Post Master at College Hill, he uses in a very liberal and extensive manner. The business of Mr. McAboy's office is done by a deputy, who is known to be very worthy of the trust, as well as capable of discharging the duties required; for which it is understood he is to receive the emoluments of the office, while Mr. McAboy enjoys the privilege of franking, as well to and from the office at Athens, where he resides, as all others within the circle of his travels.

If it be asked how he obtained the appointment, I answer, that having a small church at Newport, to which a minor part of his clerical labours are devoted, he suggested the thing to them, when a vacancy was about to occur in the office, and they very readily lent their names to a recommenda-

tion in his favour, and no opposition being made, his appointment followed as a matter of course. And although the appointment, wherever the circumstances are known, is generally very much disapproved of, upon *principle*, yet, as Mr. McAboy is a reputable clergyman, it has thus far been acquiesced in.

SYDNEY.

Ohio, July 4, 1825.

For the Reformer.

I have observed in your *Reformer* for June, that a certain *Divine* near Fredericktown, has pronounced your highly useful and intelligent paper, an *infidel publication*, and threatened to denounce it as such from the pulpit. Il-liberality of this character, and many other things, may be duly ascribed to the person whose name is in your possession, and I would advise the *reverend* gentleman to keep his peace, as it is not in his power, nor in the power of his *glorious aids*, to stop the march of intellect, and that desire for free inquiry which is the best and most rational gift from God to man. Ministers, in our day, clothed with a little self-righteousness, and fostered and cherished by the credulous and unthinking, assume high ground and lord it over the purses and consciences of men with the most unrelenting and insolent sway. Commissioned from heaven, as they pretend, they consider themselves the viceregerents of God, and oppose with bitterness, all those who doubt their *divine* mission.

It is true that the *truly* pious minister of the Gospel should be held in high estimation—and when found in the way of godliness he is indeed a crown of glory to his flock. But when, in our day, we see the pretended ambassadors of Christ seated at the head of the sinner's table, enjoying the fat of the land, talking and laughing in giddy merriment, and enjoying the anecdotes of the company assembled around the festive board, it is high time for the good layman to examine

for himself, and to see things as they are. This observation I would wish to be considered in the general, and to have no special application. Facts speak for themselves, and let the guilty beware.

It is a painful reflection that mankind in the gross are yet so bigoted, and that the most daring acts of the preacher are too often justified by the majority of the world. Brought up with a deep veneration for the clerical character, we pass over their follies, and too often make virtue vice, and vice virtue, to gratify the aberrations of the preacher, when a little due reflection would point out the absurdity and indeed the criminality of the act.

We need not travel far into history to establish the above facts—nor need we go far from Fredericktown for an exemplification of their truth. Ministers here, are but men, and far from the form of angels: but there are great exceptions, for some are much better than others. Some can *forget* and *forgive* much sooner than others, and of course are more acceptable to God. Others again want that salvation for themselves which they erroneously teach to others. Some, in short, are travelling fast to their final destiny secure of eternal rest, while others must bear the torments of a dying bed, and close their eyes in doubts and fears. Well will it be for the servant of the Lord, if he has duly done his will—if he has acquitted himself as a true shepherd, and truly loved his flock; and well will it be with every one who has been duly purged from the sinful affections of his heart, and that can die in peace with his neighbour, his Saviour, and his God.

Should the reasons for this essay transpire, and you and your paper be the subject of pulpit denunciation, you may hear something more explicit from the pen that has now addressed you. I cannot close this communication without the hope that many more persons in Fredericktown and Frederick coun-



ty will take your paper, and be led into the way of truth and useful information.

HENRY.

Middletown, July 29, 1825.

#### ANOTHER NEW PROJECT.

A company denominated the "*American Fire Insurance Company*," has lately been formed in New York, the object and plan of which will be seen by the following extracts from the Prospectus:—

"The object of the company is to aid religious institutions by contributions to their funds: to accomplish this, they propose to loan out their capital at the usual rates of interest, on good security, and to pursue the ordinary business of a Fire Insurance Company; and after paying to the stockholders, semi-annually, a dividend of six per cent. per annum, reserving a sufficient surplus to meet contingencies, and defray the necessary expenses of the institution, to divide annually, and pay over the balance to the representatives of the different religious denominations who may be members of the Board of Directors for the time being, to be by them applied to such Missionary Society or other religious institutions, as they, or a majority of them, may be disposed to patronise; the proportion of the fund to be regulated by the amount of business brought into the concern by each denomination; an account of which being kept with strict reference to such division. All business not recognized as belonging to either denomination, to be given to the American Bible or Tract Society. It must be apparent, however, that in order to give effect to the plan, a united effort of Christians of different denominations, to produce a general distribution of the stock, and an extended patronage of the office, is desirable. Accordingly, the officers and managers have been selected, and are always hereafter to be selected, in equal proportions from the five following denominations, each furnishing their own

list of names, viz.—The Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Reformed Dutch.

"The present age, which is so remarkably distinguished for grand projects, and noble enterprises, should find Christians ready to take advantage of the *spirit of the times* to subserve the interests of Christ's kingdom.

"The present enterprise is a business effort to produce contributions to religious objects, and calls for Christian patronage. It is evident the plan is practicable. The only question is, 'Are there men to be found who are willing to receive but six per cent. for a certain portion of their money, and cast the overplus into the *treasury* of the Lord?' If there are, the object is secured, and a permanent and growing fund will be created to be applied to the best of purposes." *N. York paper.*

[Is it expected that this religious stock-jobbing will promote a spirit of harmony among "the Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Reformed Dutch?"—*Phila. Gazette.*]

The *Christian Inquirer*, speaking of this "*AMERICAN FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY*," observes—

"The same arguments which have been adduced in favour of these national institutions, may with greater propriety be urged in favour of a national religion. It is stated, that by combining the talents, resources, and exertions of the different societies the evangelizing and conversion of the world may be effected with less expense, and with much more certainty. Why may it not, with equal propriety, be said that religion may be supported and continued among us at much less expense by a union of all the orthodox sects, than by individual societies, as it now is. This will be answered in the affirmative. Then when the power is obtained, there is nothing to prevent our having a *national religion*, or provision made by law for the support of an orthodox ministry."

"NATIONAL RELIGION."

A "Circular," addressed "*To the Friends of Religion and good Government*," has been forwarded to us by a Post Master in Ohio. "From whence it came," he observes, "or by whom it was written, I know not. Its object cannot be mistaken." He also informs us it is circulating through the medium of the mails, though it seems, by a paragraph at the close of the address, that the distribution of it has been limited. The author of this Circular has even gone ahead of *Lyman Beecher*, and furnished a dose which we should suppose was too strong for the appetites of most of the people of this country, *at present*. The Editor of the *Columbian Star*, it appears, has received a copy of the same Circular, and not having room for the whole production, we avail ourselves of his remarks concerning it, for a pretty correct exhibition of its nature and contents.

*From the Columbian Star of June 18.*

MAGNIFICENT SCHEME.

This is the age of projects. The public mind is in a state of ferment. The "madness of superfluous wealth" has disturbed the body politic, and ingenuity is tasked to invent schemes, the greater part of which deserve to be classed with the "thousand freaks that die in thinking."

The most absurd fancy of the kind, which we have yet seen, is contained in a *Circular* which has been sent to us, we know not whence nor by whom. The objects of the writer appear to be these:

To produce the gradual union and amalgamation of all religious sects and parties, and to establish a *National Creed*.

To make thus one form of religion, which shall be *National*, and the Ministers of which shall be educated and paid by the General Government.

To induce the clergy to adopt a "National costume, which shall be solemn and imposing, and such as will secure to the sacerdotal character that reverence which is due to it!"

These are the leading objects. The author has omitted to mention the blessings of a Pope, Cardinals, the Inquisition, faggots, &c. &c. which would follow in due time.

He appears to have been aroused to announce these mighty conceptions, by the "establishment of the American Tract Society," the "election of Chaplains in rotation by Congress," the visits of the clergy to General La Fayette, and other equally conclusive proofs, that the several denominations are prepared to acknowledge, that their differences are "immaterial and nominal," and to unite in forming one prodigious National Church.

But enough of this idle project. The writer may have upright intentions, but he is sadly ignorant or regardless of the nature of man, and of the lessons of history.

It is well for Christians, and especially for Baptists, to observe the signs of the times. There may be more cause to apprehend a powerful effort, at no distant day, to establish a National Religion in this country, than we are accustomed to suppose. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering."

[It is high time that Methodists as well as Baptists were aroused to a sense of their danger, for neither of these bodies will be placed at the helm of a *national religion*. Should such a religion indeed be established in this country, they would have to renounce the distinctive features of their sect, and conform to the new regulations, otherwise they might expect to be dragged to prison or be led to the stake.]

[From a London paper of May 14.]

The Paris papers of Wednesday arrived last night. The consideration of the items of the Budget of 1826 was continued in the Chamber of Deputies. Among those which were discussed on Tuesday was the charge of the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction. The whole sum required was 32 millions of francs. On bringing forward this article of the Budget, the Bishop of Hermopolis addressed the Chamber in a long speech on the excellence of Christianity in comparison with all other religions that have prevailed in the world. His Excellency deduced the necessity of giving the Catholic Church in France more support than it at present receives from the state. He calculated



that 50,000 ministers were requisite to disseminate the word of God, whereas there are but 35,000, most of whom are aged and infirm. Instead of 40,000 churches, which would be hardly sufficient for the Catholic population, there were only 29,000, of which number about 4,000 were vacant. After a few observations from the several Deputies, in approbation of the sentiments expressed by the Bishop of Hermonopolis, the Ecclesiastical Budget was agreed to.

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*Extract of a Letter from the State of Indiana.*

"The Reformer is read here with avidity, except by a few who say it ought to burnt. I find the principles which it promulgates are generally approved of by the reflecting part of community. Our eastern missionary prints have rather overshot the mark in representing the moral desolation of Indiana; we can inform them that we are not so deplorably destitute of moral and religious instruction as they would fain make our eastern brethren believe.

"It is astonishing with what arrogance they proclaim to their hearers that Indiana and the other western states are destitute, or nearly so, of the ministration of the word of God; and unless (say they) greater exertions are made by Education and Missionary Societies, in a short time the people at the west may be expected to degenerate into a state of Paganism.

"O the presumption of vain man! Is the arm of the Almighty shortened that he cannot save? Are the Scriptures of Truth become a sealed book that can be opened in no other way than by going through a theological seminary? I trust not—but I do believe that the Almighty is as able to raise up and send forth able ministers of the New Testament now as he was eighteen hundred years ago, without the aid of Education or Missionary Societies; and these are the kind of ministers, if any, that are wanting to build up the waste places of Indiana. Some such I believe we have at this time among us, who have been enabled by the spirit of God to dispense his word, and that without money and without price; and likewise without any help from the Education, Missionary, or Bible Societies; but they have spake as the spirit has given them utterance.

"We have at this time, within the

bounds of this county, between thirty and forty ministers of the various denominations; and I have no reason to believe that the other parts of the State have a greater lack of religious teachers than we have; and with these facts staring our missionary friends in the face they would strive to make the people believe we are lacking for preachers, and that unless we receive a timely supply, our blood will be required at their hands—Tell it not in Gath.

"I noticed, a few days since, in the Family Visitor, printed in Richmond, (Va.) that Bibles were selling at that place for seventy-five cents a piece, owing to the perfection to which the American Bible Society had carried printing;—Bibles are sold here by our shop-keepers at the same price, in this *moral wilderness*, without the aid of the American Bible Society."

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*[From the Massachusetts Spy.]*

"What shall we say of the young man, who, from no other motive, save that of profit or popularity, embraces the profession of a minister of the gospel? What shall we say, when we behold him ascend the pulpit as a rostrum, there to amuse us with a false display of rhetoric and oratory, endeavouring to imitate some standard which he can never equal, until he forgets that instead of delivering us a message from his Maker, he is vainly attempting to—aggrandize himself. Is such a character calculated to excite our veneration or respect? Nature herself is a better moralist. She will tell you there is a God, and do it with solemnity."

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*[From the Christian Secretary.]*

"Those who are 'begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,' and have the spirit of Christ, love holiness and hate sin independently of the penalty annexed to the transgression of the law. And that religion which rises no higher than a relinquishment of the practice of sin, merely from a fear of its penalty, is a sandy foundation, and will be swept away by the tempest that shall precede the judgment of the last great day; we must serve God because we delight in his character, if we would be prepared for the happiness of heaven.

"God's plan of saving sinners, secures the honour of the divine majesty, by implanting 'a right spirit' in all his subjects, and any system that does not make this provision, cannot be of God."

## NEW SECT.

Coventry [England] has been for many years famous for its great number of dissenters; and a new sect has lately sprung up there called *Samaritans*. Among these people women are permitted to preach; indeed, the founder of the sect is a female, the wife of a druggist of considerable property in Coventry of the name of Grant. Mrs. Grant is a woman of considerable talent as a preacher, and quite devoid in her speaking of what the religious call the *holy tone*, or what, in the language of the profane, is designated *cant*. The Samaritans inculcate the necessity of wearing plain clothes, and of abstaining from swearing, even in a Court of Justice. It is one of their fundamental principles, too, not to allow their preachers to receive money for their services. In other respects they appear to hold similar doctrines to those of the Methodists.

[*Globe & Emerald*.]

*Extract from the Eighth Annual Report of the United Foreign Missionary Society.*

"Inquiries have been made in behalf of a number of theological students at Princeton, Auburn, and New Haven, who are *desirous* to engage in missions to Armenia and Arabia in the east, and to Mexico, some part of South America, and the mouth of Columbia River, on this western continent."

Who would not be desirous to visit these distant and interesting countries, provided all their expenses were paid, and they were to receive a liberal monthly salary besides? It is to be observed, that all those who go as missionaries to foreign parts become men of renown, appear often in print, and expect to have their names handed down to posterity with applause and veneration. So long as these causes continue to operate, and money can be obtained, there will be no want of young men willing to engage in missionary undertakings in various parts of the world.

A clergyman named *Augustus B. Reed*, who is settled in Troy, (Mass.) was, a few days ago, subjected to 375 dollars damages for breach of promise of marriage made to a young lady. The defendant had pursued his theological studies with the plaintiff's father, the Rev. Mr. Otis Thompson, of Rehoboth, during which he courted and promised her marriage. He was afterwards ordained; but instead of fulfilling his engagements with the plain-

tiff, he married another lady, a member of his own congregation. [*Late paper*.]

The London Courier contains the following advertisement:—

"Any Nobleman, Gentleman, or Lady, wishing to have a *hermit* on their estates, may hear of one who would engage for seven years, by sending proposals, post-paid, with real name, to A. B. at," &c.

This, by some of our American Editors, is termed "*a new luxury*."

*Meeting-houses in New York*.—From a table in the New York Observer of the meeting-houses in that city, it appears that the whole number is 95,—viz. Baptist, 11; Friends, 4; Independent, 4; Lutheran, 2; Methodist, 13; Moravian, 1; New Jerusalem, 1; Presbyterian, 19; Episcopal, 18; Reformed Dutch, 13; Roman Catholic, 2; Synagogue, 1; Congregational, 1; Universalist, 2; of no denomination, 3.

The number of Episcopal clergymen in the United States, is said to be about 300; the number of Baptist clergymen about 2577; and the whole number of the clergy rising 10,000. [*National Gazette*.]

A Paris paper states that the population of North and South America is 34,284,000. Roman Catholics, 22,177,000; Protestants, 11,287,000; Indians, not christians, 820,000.

Died lately at Bridport, [England,] at the advanced age of 87, Samuel Best, the Prophet, who, for the last 30 years of his life, entertained the idea that he should be the leader of the Children of Israel to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

[*Globe & Emerald*.]

The British House of Commons have raised the salaries of the Judges. Those of the King's Bench are to receive 10,000 pounds per annum—upwards of \$40,000; and the other Judges in proportion.

\*\*\* The communication respecting an "Act of the Ohio Legislature," will be inserted in our next.

"*A Junior*" is received, but came too late for this number.

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